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1955/03/31

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31 March 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR AMBASSADOR COLLINS

Subject: General Phuong

1. General Phuong sent me word last night that President Ngo Dinh Diem had agreed to integrate 8,000 Cao Dai troops into the National Army, and would announce it to the press some time today. The Cao Dai officers, and even Pope Tac last night, were reported as being very happy over this integration.

2. I asked if this 8,000 were in addition to the 3,000 already integrated, or a total of 11,000 integrated for General Phuong. The answer was, yes. Also, I asked if these troops could be used anyplace in the nation, under the orders of the General Staff, in the same fashion as any other regular troops of the National Army. Again, the answer was yes.

3. General Trinh Minh The sent word that Pope Tac had returned to Tay Ninh yesterday morning, after a verbal tiff with Bay Vien. Pope Tac is reported to have said that if the "coup de force" attempted by the Binh Xuyen early in the morning of 30 March was a sample of the way the United Front of the sects was going to operate, he was leaving it. Pope Tac is said to be planning now on remaining at Tay Ninh.

EG Lansdale

EDWARD G LANSDALE
Colonel USAF

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Mr Kidder
Mr Cooley

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